



Testimony in Support of HB 496 “Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment (Time to Care Act of 2022)”

House Economic Matters Committee

February 15, 2022

FAVORABLE

TO: Chairman Wilson, House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Matthew M. Weaver

My name is Matt Weaver. I am a resident of District 45. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 496, the Time to Care Act of 2022, which would establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program.

Over the past few years, I have suffered from significant health issues and had to undergo lifesaving surgery that left me unable to work. I still have lingering residual effects from being sick for so long but thankfully am in recovery. During this period, it was difficult for me to find work. I struggled. My family and I struggled. In the fall of 2021, I was fortunate to find a job at Zeke’s coffee. Zeke’s has 25 employees and operates four cafes and roasteries in Maryland and D.C. Just last week, I helped Zeke’s open a new café in Pigtown. Fortunately, I know that Zeke’s will continue to support me, and my family should my health issues reappear. I believe all Marylanders deserve this sense of security and peace of mind when dealing with unprecedented health issues which is why I am writing to support HB 496.

The Time to Care Act will help address the economic hardship, stress, and other burdens that come into play when caring for new babies, loved ones with serious health conditions, or yourself. Employees’ ability to take up to 12 weeks of paid leave will help Maryland families meet their caregiving, employment, and financial needs and commitments while caring for their family.

No Marylander should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love when a medical crisis strikes, or a new child is welcomed into the home. We need comprehensive paid family and medical leave in Maryland. For just a few dollars a week, individuals, and families like mine will be protected from unpredictable health scares. It’s a no brainer. Please support HB 496.

A true paid family and medical leave policy must be cost-effective for workers, employers, and the government with employers contributing at least as much as employees. We must ensure that our paid family and medical leave program covers all working people, applies equally to everyone, covers all the well-established reasons people need leave, reflects an inclusive definition of family, and provides up to 12 weeks of leave and job security. HB 496 has all these key components of a meaningful paid family and medical leave program, and I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 496.

Thank you,
Matthew M. Weaver
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